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# Donovan Plans Integration Drive as School Chief

By LEONARD BUDER

James B. Donovan, who is scheduled to be elected president of the Board of Education today, pledged yesterday that the school system would move "steadily and surely" toward its goal of meaningful integration.

The 47-year-old lawyer, who has served the board's vice president since September, 1961, described integration as the system's No. 1 educational problem.

He declared in an interview that the board was attempting to overcome the problem "as rapidly as possible" and "with a clear sense of urgency."

However, Mr. Donovan made it clear that the board did not intend to "yield to every pressure group and go to ends which are both impractical and self-defeating as well as educationally unsound." He said that he did not favor the forced transportation of white children to schools in other areas to promote integration.

## 'Alien' Orders Decried

"To order a child to attend a school far from his own home solely on the grounds of his race, creed or color is alien to our way of life," he asserted.

Mr. Donovan became acting president yesterday when the resignation of Max J. Rubin took effect. Mr. Rubin announced last month that he would resign as president and member of the board because of reasons of health.

The board, at its public meeting tonight, is due to elect Mr. Donovan to the post on his own. Lloyd K. Garrison, a 66-year-old lawyer, is expected to be elected vice president. Both will serve until the board's annual election meeting in May.

In the interview, held at board headquarters in Brooklyn, Mr. Donovan said that he favored the neighborhood school concept—which is opposed by many



The New York Times  
James B. Donovan

civil rights groups here as a barrier to effective integration—but with a qualification.

## Neighborhood Concept Backed

"Basically, in the elementary schools," he said, "I think that the concept of the neighborhood school is sound educationally. However, this follows only if you have a fine neighborhood school. Therefore at the same time we are permitting parents to participate in the open-enrollment program and extensions of it, we are trying to raise the standards of schools in areas which desperately need improvement."

"We hope to make available to the least privileged child in the city the finest public education that can be provided in a free society."

He said that this would not mean the neglect of other pupils in the system, but he added, "I think the best gauge [of what the system does] is to measure it in terms of the least privileged child."

Commenting on the interim integration report issued on Monday by Superintendent of Schools Calvin E. Gross, which has been criticized by some civil rights groups as inadequate, Mr. Donovan noted that it was intended to be tentative and preliminary, and "now we want constructive criticism." He said the board would give the entire community a chance to be heard on the matter.

## Group Praises Gross

Although dissatisfaction with the report prompted some rights groups to threaten a school boycott in January or February, the Public Education Association yesterday commended Superintendent Gross for "an honest report which deserves the fullest consideration and backing by all organizations honestly interested in improving the New York City schools."

Turning to other matters, Mr. Donovan, who was the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for United States Senator last year, said that "throughout my tenure of office [as board president] I shall take no active part in any political matter or partisan politics." He also promised that "I will devote to the post all the time necessary, and if I should find that I am unable to give the necessary time, I will offer my resignation."

Mr. Donovan said he had a number of specific objectives, one of which is "to reorganize the board administratively by new procedures." He said he intended to "seek a greater distribution of fixed responsibilities among the members of the

board so that small groups, as committees, can function with respect to specific areas, and the full board will pass only on educational policy."

Mr. Donovan and his wife, the former Mary E. McKenna, have four children, ranging in age from 7 to 19. They live in Brooklyn.

In 1957 he won professional acclaim for his defense of Col. Rudolf I. Abel, the Soviet agent who was tried here on espionage charges. In early 1962 Mr. Donovan negotiated the exchange of Colonel Abel for Francis Gary Powers, the American U-2 pilot imprisoned by the Soviet, and an American student who was also held prisoner. Later he was instrumental in securing the release of the prisoners captured by Cuba in the Bay of Pigs invasion.